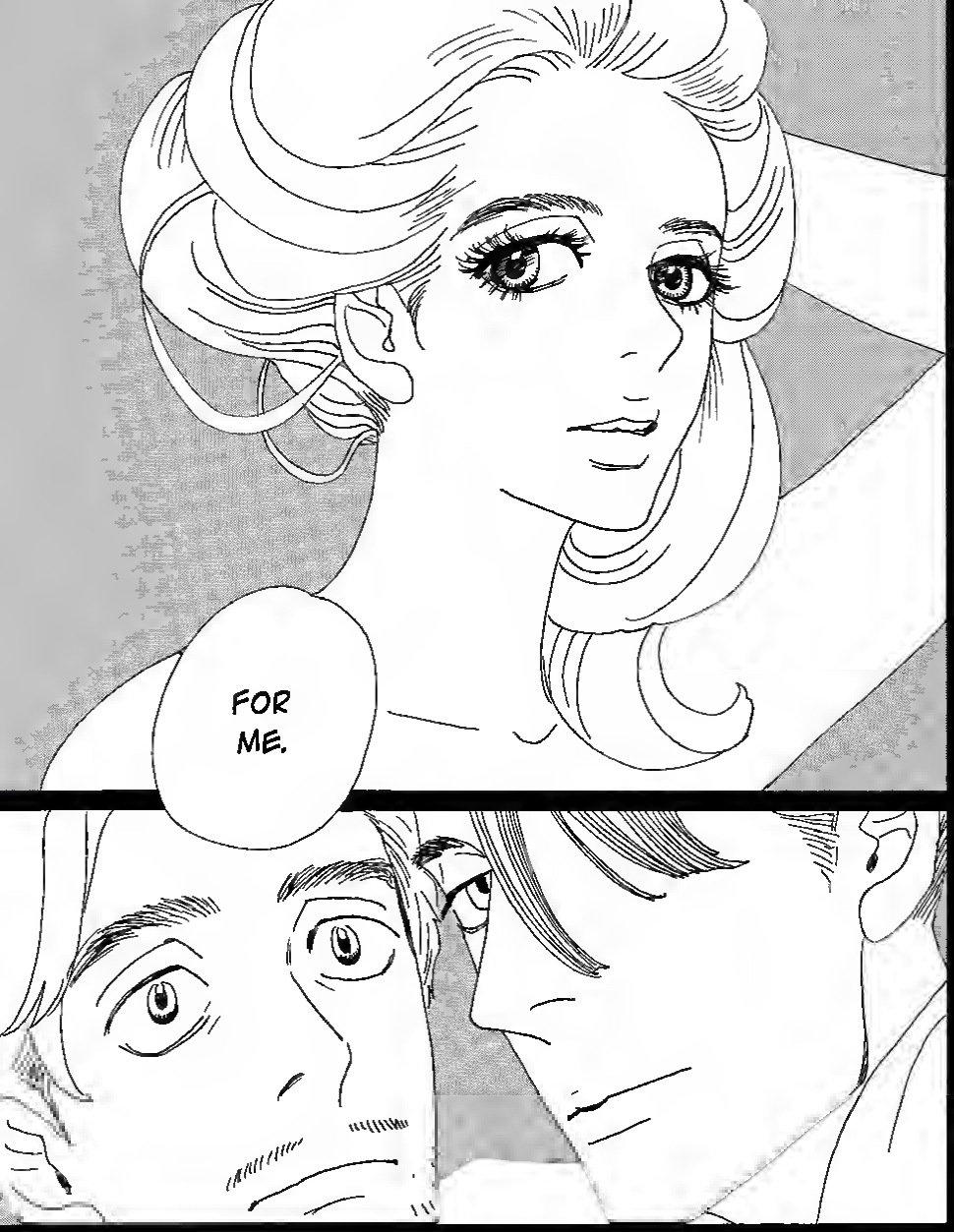
Truth is, I'd been waiting for something like this.
CAN I...
...ASK YOU FOR A FAVOR?
...
WHY...?
My own life was far too empty.

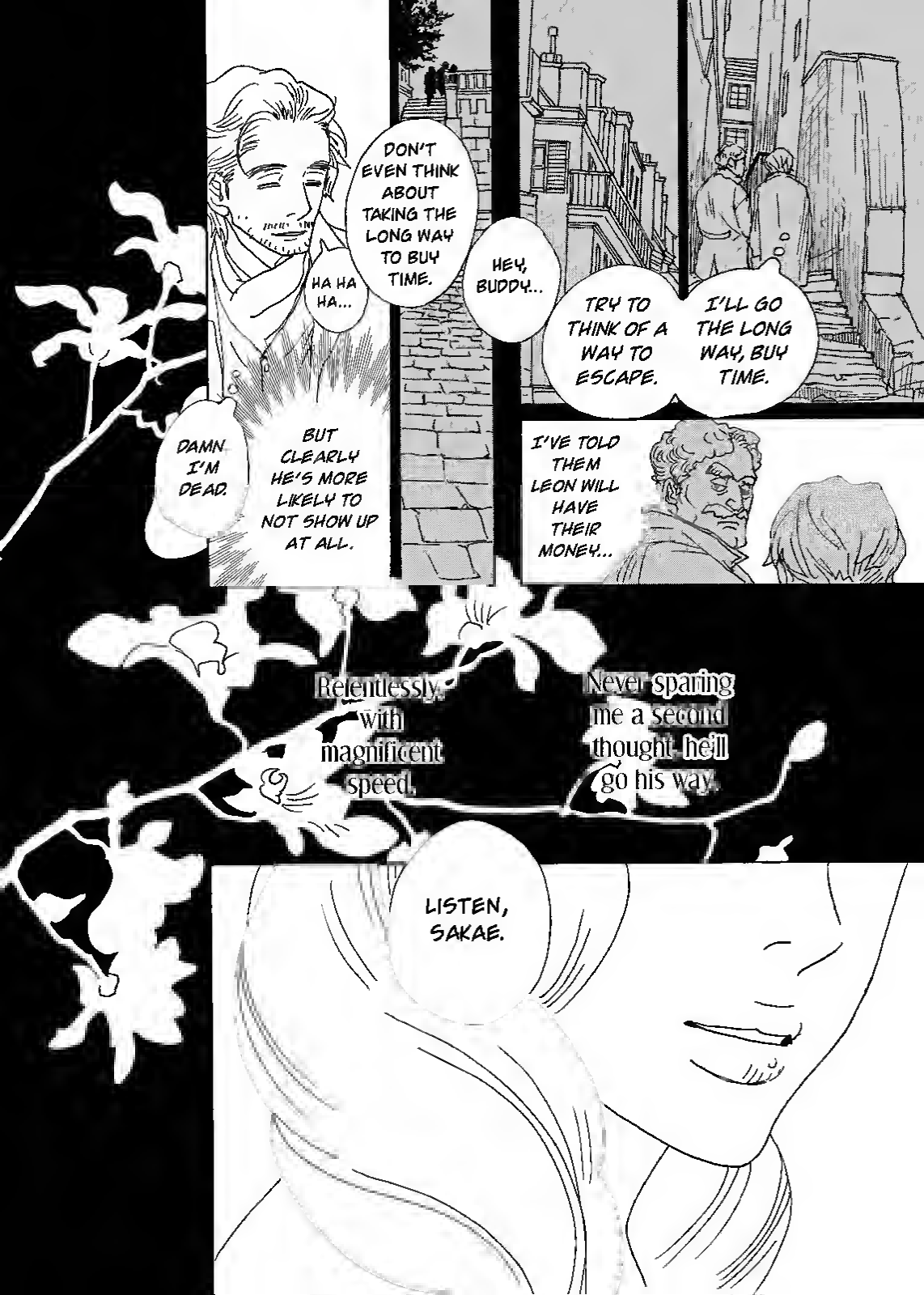
COME ON, MISTER.
I GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE SOMEHOW.
I NEED YOU...
...TO GET THOSE THUGS OFF MY BACK A BIT.
SO WHY SHOULD I--?



I'm sure
I wanted this.

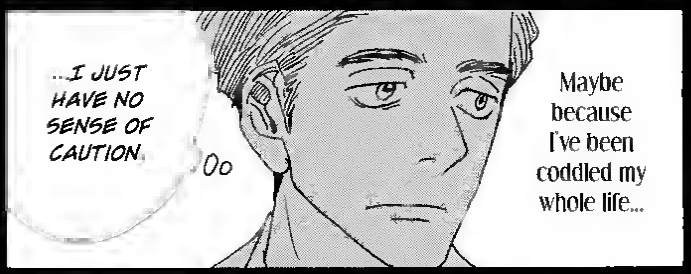
WHO ARE YOU?
LEON SENT ME.
...
BEAT IT! HE'S IN THERE, RIGHT?
I'M AFRAID HE JUST LEFT.
HE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE COMING.
GOOD, GOOD
SO HE ASKED ME TO TAKE YOU TO HIM.
SHUT UP, MONKEY!
OUTTA THE WAY!

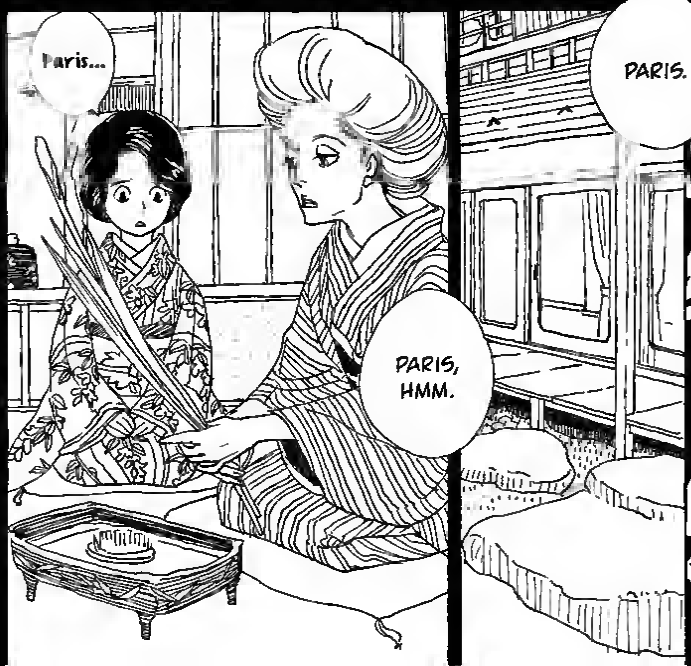
THIS HOUSE BELONGS TO BARON FOLSCH.
YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE A SCENE HERE.
HMPH.
LEON IS WAITING FOR YOU WITH YOUR MONEY. COME THIS WAY.
AH!
...!!
THIS BETTER NOT BE A TRICK.
OR YOU'LL WASH UP IN THE SEINE.


I'LL GO THE LONG WAY, BUY TIME.
TRY TO THINK OF A WAY TO ESCAPE.
HEY, BUDDY...
I'VE TOLD THEM LEON WILL HAVE THEIR MONEY...
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT TAKING THE LONG WAY TO BUY TIME.
HA HA HA...
DAMN I'M DEAD.
BUT CLEARLY HE'S MORE LIKELY TO NOT SHOW UP AT ALL.
Relentlessly, with magnificent speed,
Never sparing me a second thought he'll go his way.
LISTEN, SAKAE.

YOUR LIFE ISN'T IN DANGER.
WON'T YOU PLEASE SAVE MY LIFE?
IF YOU DO THIS, YOU'LL BE SAVING TWO LIVES. ONLY YOU CAN.
PLEASE!
IF LEON DIED, I COULD HARDLY GO ON LIVING.
SAVING HIM MEANS SAVING ME!

I've always been drawn to desperate situations.





A WRITER.
I WISH TO GROW AS A WRITER.
TO BROADEN MY HORIZONS.
WHATEVER FOR? WHY WOULD YOU GO THERE?
It was a dare. "If you can say it without shame, say it again."
When my mother repeated a word...
SAKAE-SAN!

She was shy, but a good girl. My mother was fond of her, too.
Isako was the daughter of my father's friend, Representative Takahashi. We'd grown up together.
I'M SURE YOU KNOW.
MY FATHER'S COUSIN, FUMIAKI, LIVES OVER THERE.
IF HE'LL LET ME STAY WITH HIM, I'LL LIVE EASY
WILL YOU WRITE YOUR NOVELS AGAIN?
TH...
I'LL WRITE IF I CAN WRITE. I WON'T IF I CAN'T.

THEN...
THEN WRITE LETTERS TO ME! PLEASE!!
WELL...BUT MY HAND-WRITING'S AWFUL.
NO, UH, THAT'S NOT...
"THINK OF IT AS A LETTER."
DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A LETTER, JUST WRITE SOME-THING.
WRITE SOMETHING EVERY DAY, DOESN'T MATTER WHAT.
YOU TOLD ME THAT, BEFORE.
SO...
IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH THE NOVEL...

But I didn't return them.
I was aware of Isako's feelings.
I just...
It was nothing to do with her.
...
Didn't care about what others felt for me.

DEAR ISAKO-SAMA...
MM!
WHAT NICE PAPER.
TODAY I'M IN FLORENCE, ITALY...
...
I tried writing her a letter.

For the next three months, I threw myself into the Paris night life.
I completely forgot about the notebook.
But I wasn't really interested.

Into the stifling, turgid night.